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**DeNUCCI URGES MORE EFFICIENCY
IN MANAGEMENT OF JURY POOLS**

State Auditor Joe DeNucci reported today that Massachusetts could reduce the number of people who are unnecessarily called for jury duty by employing more efficient use of jury pools.

In an audit of the Office of Jury Commissioner (OJC), DeNucci said the state should consider reducing jury pool target numbers (the number of jurors that it is hoped will report for jury duty at a particular court on a given day) as well as doing a more effective job of notifying jurors through the OJC's call-in system the day before if they are not going to be needed.

During calendar year 2006, the OJC summoned 1,004,842 potential jurors. Of that amount, 338,931 jurors served in 2006 and 98,744 postponed their service until the following year. A total of 264,388 were disqualified from service for a variety of reasons, including age, relocation from the district, non-citizen or non-English speaking status, and prior juror service within the past three years.

DeNucci said minimizing the need for jurors in certain areas could result in savings of 15,000 juror days annually at the district court level alone, which would keep those people available for future sessions and save employers at least \$2.2 million annually in the cost of jury duty leave. It would also free up potential jurors to serve where they are needed more.

DeNucci's report noted that the OJC is overhauling its juror management software, which should provide more timely statistical information in order to better monitor juror utilization and provide a more accurate count of actual jurors reporting compared to the preferred target number. However, the audit disclosed that the OJC needs to improve its monitoring of the contractor that implemented the new jury system software. According to the audit, the amount of the contract increased from the original \$150,000 to \$1.4 million three years later, but the OJC lacked sufficient documentation to support what the contractor was working on and being paid for.

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DeNucci said steps additionally need to be taken to address a low number of available jurors in certain areas, including Suffolk, Franklin and Berkshire Counties. DeNucci said this problem could be addressed by expanding and improving source lists for potential jurors beyond the annual Massachusetts Census, as is done now. Because census data may not accurately count the entire population, DeNucci said the state might be able to identify more potential jurors through such additional sources as Department of Revenue data and driver's license data, as is done in other states.

DeNucci said it is unfair that residents in areas with a shortage of jurors are more likely to be called again when their three-year exemption expires.

DeNucci's audit also acknowledged the work already done in the district courts to review juror target numbers and reduce the number of jurors called.

"Serving on a jury should be considered one of the most important rights and privileges of an American citizen," said DeNucci. "However, many citizens view it as an inconvenience that they would prefer to avoid. If people knew they were being called only when absolutely needed, they might be more willing to serve, so I hope the Office of Jury Commissioner will consider the recommendations in my report."